

Primary best practice guide

How primary schools
are celebrating difference
and tackling homophobia



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Foreword

More than two years ago, a group of primary schools agreed to be at the forefront of Stonewall's pioneering work to prevent discrimination and prepare their pupils for the modern world. Together, we developed a ground-breaking range of age appropriate materials designed to give teachers the tools to open up conversations about the rich tapestry of family life in 21st century Britain. Thanks to the generous support of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Monument Trust, more than 10,000 primary schools have now received our *Different Families* materials, ranging from posters and stickers to our 28-minute training DVD for teachers.

This guide highlights how just some of those schools have put these resources into practice. One striking message from these case studies is that celebrating different families is not only easy to do but has wonderful results for all young people, as well as helping schools prevent homophobic bullying. When pupils learn that families come in different shapes and sizes and that the most important ingredient in all family life is love, it gives children the confidence to celebrate their grandparents, foster parents, adoptive parents and carers too.

Primary schools have a critical role to play in helping children understand that difference is something to be respected and celebrated. If your school is thinking about starting on this journey, we hope that the experiences shared in this guide will give you some very real practical assistance. Please do contact us if we can help you on that journey.

Ben Summerskill

Chief Executive, Stonewall

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The purpose of this guide

When Stonewall commissioned YouGov polling of over 1000 primary school teachers for the *Teachers' Report* 2009 the results were stark; more than three quarters of primary school teachers reported that they heard the use of homophobic language such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in their schools and more than two in five teachers reported that their pupils were experiencing homophobic bullying.

These experiences from teachers were subsequently mirrored in the findings of University of Cambridge and Stonewall research into the experiences of children from different families (*Different Families* 2010). This research found that although children with same-sex parents grow up in loving families, they realise that other children use the word gay to mean rubbish and many of their teachers weren't challenging this use. These young people told Stonewall that because of this, they were sometimes afraid to tell others that they had gay parents in case they were bullied. It also made things more difficult for them that lesbian, gay or bisexual people are never mentioned in their schools, making them feel excluded and invisible.

The *Teachers' Report* also found that most teachers weren't unwilling to tackle homophobic bullying. On the contrary, almost nine in ten primary school teachers said that they believed that their school has a duty to tackle homophobic bullying. However, they felt that they lacked the confidence and knowhow to do so; nine in ten primary school teachers reported having had no training on how to tackle homophobic bullying.

As a result of this, many young people were entering secondary schools with negative impressions of gay people, and a lack of tolerance and understanding of difference and diversity. Research from the University of Cambridge in the *School Report* 2012 found

that the impact of this was that more than half of gay pupils in Britain's secondary schools experience homophobic bullying, which has a profound impact on their attainment, health and wellbeing.

To meet this evident need, in 2010 Stonewall expanded its ground-breaking work to tackle homophobic bullying to primary schools. Stonewall developed a suite of resources which included a training DVD specifically designed for primary school teachers, a guide on how schools can include different families and posters and stickers celebrating different families to be displayed in the classroom. These resources have now been sent to over 10,000 of Britain's primary schools, with the remaining schools due to receive them over the next year.

Two years since launching this work many primary schools have embraced it wholeheartedly. Across Britain, schools are using the resources to great effect to make their schools the most inclusive learning environments they can be.

This guide shares best practice from great schools from around the country who are leading the way on this work. It provides school leaders and teachers with tangible examples, from the ground, about how to start this work, some ideas and inspiration for along the way as well as providing tips for addressing some of the challenges they may face in the process.

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Getting started

All of the schools which Stonewall has worked with stressed the importance of getting the basics right. Having a clear plan for work to tackle homophobia helps to stop problems arising down the line, and makes the work less daunting. It also allows schools to more easily answer questions that parents or others might have about what this work will entail.

Know where you stand

Before starting, it's important for schools to acknowledge the problems they have and to explore the best ways to address them. Work to celebrate difference and diversity shouldn't just be a tag on – this can make it tokenistic and ultimately counterproductive. Instead, the best schools have looked at how they can integrate this work throughout their curriculum and school life.

In practice

Malmesbury Park Primary School, Bournemouth, decided that it was important to embark on this work after attending a Stonewall Education Seminar. The seminar made the school realise it was important to begin tackling homophobic language. In order to do this, the school formed a partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council to produce work around family diversity.

In practice

At **St Luke's Primary School**, Brighton, the school decided that it was important to conduct a whole school equalities audit. This found that the school needed to do more to promote gender equality and family diversity in a mindful way – in anticipation of children's needs rather than as an ad-hoc response. The school then developed a whole school equalities plan to address these issues.

Lead from the top

To do this work effectively a whole school approach is necessary with strong leadership from senior management and governors. The school leadership should take responsibility for communicating the importance of this work across the school community. Strong leadership shows pupils that these issues are being taken seriously and gives staff the confidence that they'll be supported if problems arise. Less than half of primary school teachers say that their head teacher demonstrates clear leadership on this issue (*Teachers' Report* 2009), leaving many teachers uncertain about starting this work.

One problem which some schools highlighted was that occasionally work around tackling homophobia is delegated to a single member of staff, which makes it both ineffective and unsustainable. Whilst it is perfectly appropriate for someone to lead and co-ordinate the work, it must be seen as the responsibility of *all staff* across the school.

Involve pupils

As well as involving their staff, the best schools are involving pupils in their work from the outset. Pupils help to inform anti-bullying work and shed light on exactly where intervention is needed. Involving pupils in the design of anti-bullying work also helps to get their support for the task itself. Some schools have used school councils as a way of doing this, which has led to the council members becoming ambassadors for the work, and the pupil body becoming more self-policing.

Train your staff

The *Teachers' Report* found that by far the biggest barrier to tackling homophobic bullying in primary schools was that staff felt they lacked the training and knowhow to do so. Training staff not only gives them more confidence, but also makes them more

effective in delivering this work. The training needn't be difficult; Stonewall's *Celebrating Difference* DVD is a concise (28 minutes) training DVD for staff and can be easily integrated into a staff training day.

In practice

At **The Jenny Hammond Primary School**, London Borough of Waltham Forest, they have been using the *Celebrating Difference* DVD to train new members of staff as a springboard to introduce them to the school's work around difference and diversity. The school found the DVD particularly useful as it laid out exactly what the school stands for and condenses a day's training into 30 minutes.

Many schools also turn to external support and training, to offer new perspectives and give added authority to the work.

In practice

One participant in a training session led by an outside group at **Martins Wood Primary School**, Stevenage, said: 'It was useful having an outsider lead the session as it gave another perspective for us and helped support our equalities work but from somebody new. We alone could not have made the same statements with that authority and impact'.

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Tackling homophobic language and bullying

Three quarters of primary school teachers report hearing language such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in their schools. The result of this is that young people start to associate being gay with something bad. What's more, there are already almost 10,000 same-sex parent families in the UK; this use of language in schools makes the children from these families think their family is being equated with something bad. Tackling homophobic language should be a priority for all primary schools.

Set boundaries

Schools should be clear about what language is and isn't acceptable; this should include having a zero tolerance approach to homophobic language that young people are made aware of. Some schools also bolster their policy with a language charter which all pupils sign up to, making sure that they're made aware of what's expected of them.

In practice

At **St Luke's**, a language code was developed with the help of the pupils' equalities 'E-team'. The code agreed that the use of the term 'gay' as a put-down was hurtful and never acceptable. It also included procedures for reporting incidents of use of homophobic language and staff were trained on how to challenge it when it occurred.

Consistency and reporting

Once a school puts a policy in place it's important that it's acted upon and that there's consistency across all staff in the approach taken. Pupils should be told that they shouldn't tolerate homophobic language and be encouraged to report it. In order to measure the success of the policy schools should record incidents of homophobic language and chart them over time. Recording

incidents also helps schools identify if there are particular flashpoints requiring specific intervention, for instance amongst a specific year group or area of the school.

In practice

At **Holbrook** a log was introduced and children were encouraged to complain if they were called gay. There was a definite shift in culture. Children no longer put up with the insults, reported incidents and expected them to be dealt with. Governors were informed of the number and frequency of incidents along with the reporting of race incidents.

In practice

At **Martins Wood**, PSHE lessons and activities have been designed to challenge pupils on their hurtful and negative use of the word 'gay' and all staff (who have been trained using the *Celebrating Difference* DVD from Stonewall) are expected to challenge all forms of homophobia.

Some teachers tell us that they don't intervene when pupils use homophobic language because pupils don't know the real meaning of the word and aren't referring to gay people. However, this use of language still equates being gay with something bad; these negative connotations can have a long term impact on young people's self esteem. This makes it all the more important to take a consistent, zero tolerance approach to dealing with its misuse.

Explaining language

The best schools realise however that the answer isn't simply to ban the use of the word 'gay'. Doing this can be counterproductive as it further reinforces the idea that 'gay' is something taboo.

In practice

Despite the success of **Holbrook's** work, whilst the use of insults based on homophobic language decreased, the word remained loaded. This became clear when a Year Six boy talking about his uncle during a PSHE lesson, mentioned that he was gay. 'You can't say that!' was the immediate response of several of his peers. At this point it became clear to the school that an unintended consequence of the work was to suggest that the word gay should *never* be used. The school realised that wider work to allow pupils to understand the diverse nature of society and family relationships was needed.

In tackling homophobic language, primary schools should explain why using homophobic language is wrong and hurtful and, in an age appropriate way, explain what the word actually means. To do this, tackling homophobic language should be part of a school's wider work towards building a curriculum which includes gay people and different families. This not only removes the taboo from the word gay, but also shows young people exactly why the use of homophobic language is hurtful.

In practice

Having done this work teachers at **Holbrook** now feel much more willing not only to challenge homophobic language, but also to explain to children why using 'gay' as an insult is wrong and what the word means in its correct context.

In practice

At **Jenny Hammond**, the school leadership stressed to staff the importance of pupils understanding the proper meaning of the words lesbian and gay as part of the way we describe families. Staff were encouraged to use the words in their proper context in order to dispel misconceptions that young people had about them.

For more information about tackling homophobic language see Stonewall's *Challenging Homophobic Language* guide.

Tackling bullying

Schools find that tackling homophobic language goes a long way towards tackling homophobic bullying as well by removing negative connotations from being gay. Most homophobic bullying in primary schools won't involve children who are actually gay, but instead children who are different from the norm. It should be dealt with in the same way as homophobic language, through a zero tolerance policy which is clear and communicated to all, as well as through creating a school environment which celebrates difference and diversity rather than bullying those who express or demonstrate it.



An inclusive curriculum

In order to tackle homophobic bullying and ensure that language is used correctly, schools should ensure that young people are aware of the difference and diversity of family life. Part of achieving this involves having a curriculum which recognises that families come in a number of shapes and sizes and include same-sex parents. This work not only helps to dispel misconceptions about being gay but also better prepares young people for life in 21st century Britain.

Schools also often find that these aren't topics which are completely alien to young people. Two thirds of the teachers who addressed these issues told us they did so because young people themselves raised the issue (*Teachers' Report*).

Wider inclusion work

The best schools realise that this work doesn't have to be something which stands alone, or is 'crowbarred' into a school's agenda. Instead, the work should form part of a school's wider work around inclusion and respect. In this way, schools show that they treat the issue just like any other – as part of preparing their pupils to be good citizens.

In practice

At **Ladycross Infant School**, Derbyshire, the work does not focus overtly on sexuality, but includes it within the holistic context of teaching and learning as well as part of the school's visual environment. For example, assumptions are not made about the children's family backgrounds. Instead, the school uses a variety of different story books to illustrate that families may have one or two parents, or two mums or two dads. The Stonewall *Different Families, Same Love* poster and stickers are also displayed in the corridor along with a rainbow flag. The school feels the flag's purpose is more than decorative and instead is about sending out a positive message of acknowledgement to LGB parents and family members.

In practice

Malmesbury Park developed a family diversity lesson in conjunction with the local authority. This allowed children to discuss similarities and differences in appearance, hobbies or talents between them and their friends and to celebrate these differences. The school used *The Family Book* and *The Picnic in the Park* to cover a range of different family types including same-sex parents, single parent families, foster parents, step parents and adoption.

Displaying posters and signs

Displaying Stonewall's *Different Families* posters is a good way for schools to get started. As well as sending out a visible sign that a school is a tolerant and diverse place they act as a trigger for discussion amongst young people and make them aware that different types of families exist.

The posters are also used by schools during circle time; young people are encouraged to look at the posters, draw their own family and then compare it with their classmates, to show them how all families are different. Alternatively, pupils use the posters as the basis for a discussion about what makes a family a family; pupils quickly realise that it's things like 'love', 'support' and 'how they treat one another' that matter, not who makes up the family.

In practice

Martins Wood found that one of the most useful things about Stonewall's *Different Families, Same Love* posters was that they encompass many differences in family life, not just sexuality. This allowed children from a whole range of different backgrounds to talk openly about their families and learn what other people's looked like.

Using storybooks

Many traditional storybooks for young people excluded gay people and different families, focusing exclusively on heterosexual relationships. However, there are now a number of high quality children's books which feature same-sex parents and challenge stereotypes. These books have been designed specifically for primary school children and are age appropriate and subtle. The books can form the basis of circle time, be integrated into learning exercises, or simply left on the shelves along with other reading books.

In practice

At Cunningham Hill Junior School, St Alban's, the pupils were read *You are Special* and *And Tango Makes Three* to each class, and then discussed why we should accept people's differences and not use them as insults. Pupils also have a yearlly lesson on what makes a perfect family. The images used cover all types of families including gay, disabled, mixed race, different religions etc. and the message by the end of the lesson is 'No family is perfect, but mine is perfect for me'.

In practice

At St Matthew's Primary School, Cambridgeshire, the school decided that changing the curriculum was important, so they bought books that reflected same-sex relationships to put into classrooms. Some of the work included looking at difference with reception age children, using Stonewall's *Different Families* to start discussions about their own families, and reading a variety of picture books that represented different types of families.

Schools have also found the story books are adaptable and they can easily be used as the basis for activities, games and school plays as well as for story time.

In practice

At **Ladycross**, teachers developed a specific resource around the story book *And Tango Makes Three*, a true story, which focuses on two male penguins who adopt a chick together. The school has created a story sack containing the book and props, so that after listening to the story children can tell and re-enact it. Children are encouraged to discuss the story and to understand that many families are different. Children then draw and label their family, sharing it with the rest of the class during circle time as well as displaying it on the classroom wall.

Don't make assumptions

As part of this work, schools have recognised the importance of not making assumptions about their pupils. One of the reasons that some young people from different families feel uncomfortable telling others about their parents is because their teachers have assumed that they have heterosexual parents. Whilst this isn't deliberate, it can make these young people feel excluded from their learning. To avoid this, staff should use language which allows children from all families to talk about their home life; for instance by asking what pupils' parents or carers do rather than what their mum and dad do. In school activities based on parents, schools should think of ways to make sure that children from different families don't feel excluded. For instance when young people make cards for parents on mother's or father's day, consider that some young people have same-sex parents, come from a single parent family or live with grandparents. This isn't hard to do, and by doing it primary schools can ensure that all young people are able to feel included in their learning.

In practice

During the family diversity lesson at **Malmesbury Park**, pupils produced a piece of work based on the Stonewall poster *Different Families, Same Love* with each child drawing their own family. The school found the lesson to be of real value to the children who were able to share their thoughts with sensitivity and empathy. One child in a Year Five class, asked what he had learnt about different families, said: 'I have learnt that the stereotypical view of a family is a mum and a dad, brothers and sisters but I have learnt that families are different but equally important.'

Including lesbian and gay people in the curriculum

With older pupils, some schools have begun to integrate lesbian and gay people into the curriculum more broadly, for instance through exploring some of the discrimination which lesbian and gay people have faced historically and in the modern day.

In practice

In Year Five at **St Matthews**, the teaching was more explicit as a way of examining homophobia. The children looked at books from the 1960s and 1970s and discussed how the families were portrayed (usually white, middle class, mother at home). They then looked at how books had changed by the 1990s, with more ethnicities being represented. They then read *Prince and Prince*. For most children this was the first time they had seen a same-sex couple in a children's book. They were then asked to recreate their own picture book, and the majority chose to include same-sex couples.

All of the schools featured in this guide, and many more, found this work rewarding and enjoyable. Their experience mirrors that of teachers more generally, with 95 per cent of primary school teachers who had tried this type of work saying that they would do it again (*Teachers' Report*).

For more information on including different families and integrating lesbian and gay people in the curriculum see Stonewall's *Including Different Families* guide.



Stonewall *Different Families* poster on display



Pupils point out their own family relationships based on the posters



Pupils' own interpretation of different families



A pupil's own interpretation of different families



Pupils reading story books featuring same-sex parents



A specially created story bag lets children act out *And Tango Makes Three*



A teacher uses *The Sissy Duckling* during circle time



A pupil display celebrating the diversity of their own families

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Celebrating difference

As well as including different families in the curriculum and tackling misuse of language, one of the easiest ways that schools have found to create a culture free of homophobic bullying is to actively celebrate difference. By celebrating difference with young people, primary schools send out a message that it's OK for them not to conform to the norm and that no one should be bullied for being different. Schools that do this create a learning environment where young people feel able to be themselves; all of the evidence suggests that not only will this make them happier, but it will also improve their performance at school.

Challenging stereotypes

Primary school teachers told the *Teachers' Report* that those young people most likely to experience homophobic bullying were those who didn't conform to gender stereotypes, for instance boys who were perceived as being feminine, girls who were into sports and boys who were academic. The findings from secondary school teachers found similar types of pupils most at risk of bullying at an older age. This evidence suggests that intolerance of those that don't conform to stereotypes begins in primary school and continues through into secondary school.

In practice

At **Cunningham Hill**, the school has looked at the language they use, for instance saying 'netball club' not 'girls netball club' and 'parents and carers' as well as 'mum and dad'. They also looked at how they celebrate differences within the school by encouraging pupils to take part in activities that break down stereotyping e.g. boys knitting, girls' judo awards etc.

Primary schools can stop this intolerance from developing by actively challenging gender stereotypes. This includes making sure that school activities aren't exclusively for pupils of one gender or another, and using inclusive language to show that it's fine for people to behave in a way that makes them feel comfortable.

Holding events

Some schools are going further than this and have started actively celebrating difference through assemblies, plays and events. Once again, these events don't have to focus purely on sexuality, but can take into account all of the aspects of diversity that make a school unique.

In practice

At **Jenny Hammond**, they hold an annual 'Diversity Week' in February to coincide with LGBT History Month in which they celebrate the difference and diversity of family life and showcase all of the school's work to promote inclusion and tolerance over the previous year.

Celebrate Role Models

As well as looking at fictional depictions of gay people, many schools found that work in this area had its biggest impact when it involved real gay people who were part of the school community. This doesn't mean singling gay people out or treating them any differently, but instead schools celebrating their engagements, marriages or births as they would with straight members of the school community.

In practice

Last term one of the Teaching Assistants at **Cunningham Hill Junior School** had their civil partnership and this was included in the school newsletter. As a result, Year Three children asked if they could make a Civil Partnership card, which was signed by the whole class, who proudly told the head teacher about what this meant in the lunch queue.

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Moving up

When pupils move to secondary school, the negative attitudes they may have developed in primary school can manifest into more serious bullying. Stonewall's *School Report 2012* found over half of secondary school students were experiencing homophobic bullying and one in six were experiencing physical abuse. Schools can do specific work with their Year Six pupils to help reduce the likelihood of pupils taking part in, or being the victim of, homophobic bullying when they reach secondary school.

In practice

In order to help prepare **Martins Wood** pupils for moving to secondary school the school arranged anti-homophobia workshops for their Year Six classes. These sessions included looking at stereotyping, homophobia and importantly how young people themselves can challenge homophobic bullying if they see or experience it.

Some schools have also brought lesbian, gay and bisexual young people of secondary school age into their school to talk to pupils directly about their experiences.

In practice

At **St Luke's**, they brought in external support to help manage the transition to secondary school, but this time in the form of a local LGBT youth group Allsorts. This gave their Year Six pupils the chance to hear directly about the experiences of some lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and how they dealt with homophobic bullying and language.

By doing this work, schools ensure that young people enter secondary school knowing that they don't have to put up with homophobic language, and are more willing to challenge others who do.

In practice

At **St Matthew's**, local charity SexYouality ran workshops with Year Six pupils. A survey of pupils was conducted before and after the workshops and the school found that attitudes to same-sex relationships changed quite dramatically. After the workshop, pupils were also able to recognise when someone is being homophobic. St Matthew's prides itself on the fact that children in the school will go on to secondary school knowing that homophobia is unacceptable and prepared to challenge it.

Some schools are going further and are working directly with feeder secondaries. In doing this schools ensure a consistency of approach to dealing with these issues and send a clear message to young people about to move up to secondary school that this will also be an environment where they'll be able to be themselves.

In practice

At **Jenny Hammond School**, they quickly realised it was important to be working with feeder secondaries. This helped to show young people that this isn't just something being done in isolation by one school. This also helped to show them that their secondary schools will support them and/or others if they do grow up to be gay, just as they support heterosexual pupils.

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Managing Resistance

Often, a barrier to starting this work is that teachers worry about the reactions of parents and the local community. In the two years since this work began, and after the resources were sent out to 10,000 primary schools, there are only a handful of cases of the work having been met with resistance. Even in these cases, the majority have resulted in parents being more than happy for their children to take part once they've been given more information about the work.

Schools that have done this work successfully have found that the best way to keep parents on side is to keep them informed. Schools should inform parents through newsletters and parents' evenings about the work that they'll be doing and exactly why they're doing it. Schools should have copies of the teaching materials that they will use available for them to see, which should quickly allay any concerns and show that the work is sensitive and age appropriate.

In practice

Malmesbury Park had feedback from three parents when they did this work, all of whom referred to the inclusion of same-sex parents in their work which had been covered in a subtle way amongst a range of family types. The parents who did contact the school said they would have liked to have been informed about the lesson beforehand and why the work was necessary. In most cases, the exploration and clarification of the work was enough. But the school found it worth noting that some parents, particularly those of religious belief, might have opinions that differ to the objectives of this work.

If resistance continues the good news is that the law is very much on a school's side (see Chapter 8 for more information). Schools can explain to parents that creating a culture of respect is something that they take seriously and all members of the school community are expected to embrace this ethos.

In practice

Jenny Hammond School offers the following points of advice:

- 1** Be open and transparent about the work, have lesson plans ready to show parents and respond to concerns that they might express.
- 2** Repeat the fact that you are an inclusive school and embrace and celebrate differences at every opportunity.
- 3** Make it clear to parents that the discussion here isn't about sex, it's about love. Many parents will automatically assume this is about sex. Stonewall's *Different Families* resources are about just that – show them to parents and they are likely to have less of a problem.
- 4** Stand your ground; be professional, particularly when faced with tricky members of staff or parents. Be clear about what the law says and have it on hand to show others.
- 5** Remember that on a very basic level, this work is about inclusion – we can't as schools choose the groups we feel comfortable with, and exclude those we're not sure about.

In general, schools find parents more than willing to support the work. Parents and carers don't want their children to be bullied or discriminated against, nor do they want their child to be a bully. In YouGov polling of 2,000 adults for Stonewall in *Living Together*, 93 per cent of parents of under-18s and 92 per cent of people of faith said that homophobic bullying in schools should be tackled.

In fact, the best schools are actively involving parents in their work. At a basic level this includes having policies which parents and carers sign up to and explicitly state their role in the school community. In other schools, parents are involved in events such as diversity week or school plays. Given that so much of this work in primary schools is about different families it makes sense to have parents and carers involved.



What the law says

Equality Act 2010

The public sector Equality Duty requires all schools in England, Scotland and Wales, including academies and free schools, to eliminate discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Primary schools are expected to set age appropriate equality objectives, although these do not have to be in relation to the national curriculum. Equality objectives could include committing to reduce incidences of homophobic language in school, or looking to reflect pupils' different families better. These objectives should have tangible actions that allow schools to measure their progress.

For more information about the Equality Act 2010, see Stonewall's *Sexual Orientation The Equality Act Made Simple* www.stonewall.org.uk/equalityact

Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education and Inspections Act places a duty on schools to promote the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. This includes the children of same-sex parents in primary schools and those who experience homophobic bullying.

In the 2010 Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, the Coalition Government reiterated that tackling homophobic bullying was a key priority and highlighted schools' responsibility to prevent and respond to this bullying.

Ofsted

The new Ofsted framework explicitly directs inspectors to look at a school's efforts to tackle bullying based on sexual orientation and how the school supports the needs of distinct groups of pupils, such as pupils with same-sex parents. Ofsted's guidance to inspectors on the new framework suggests that primary school inspectors should ask whether:

- pupils ever hear anyone use the word 'gay' when describing a thing, or whether they have been told by teachers that using the word 'gay' to mean something is rubbish, is wrong, and why it is wrong
- pupils ever get picked on by other children for not behaving like a 'typical girl' or a 'typical boy'
- pupils have had any lessons about different types of families (single parent, living with grandparents, having two mummies or two daddies).

In addition, it is also suggested that they ask staff, amongst other things:

- how the school seeks to support LGB & T pupils and those from LGB & T families
- whether policies include reference to carers as well as parents.

Within nine months of the new framework being introduced, over 180 primary school inspection reports had mentioned the school's efforts to tackle homophobic bullying and include different families.

In practice

At **Jenny Hammond School**'s most recent Ofsted inspection, the report noted 'Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic and emotional bullying, such as name calling and making others feel isolated'.

In practice

At **St Matthew's** inspectors remarked: 'The school promotes equality extremely well, gaining national recognition for its pioneering work in tackling homophobia.'

For further information from Ofsted on tackling homophobic bullying, you may wish to read their report *No place for bullying* available here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/no-place-for-bullying>

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Top 10 recommendations for primary schools

1 ACKNOWLEDGE AND IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

School policies should make clear that there is zero tolerance for homophobic bullying and language in the school community. Incidents of homophobic language and bullying should be recorded and tracked over time.

2 EXPLAIN LANGUAGE

Teachers should be willing to explain to young people why it's important to use language in its proper context and what terms such as gay actually mean, in an age appropriate way.

3 INCLUDE DIFFERENT FAMILIES

Primary schools should recognise the difference and diversity of family life by displaying Stonewall's *Different Families* posters around the school, including different families in the school curriculum and stocking storybooks which feature different families and can be read aloud during circle time.

4 ENCOURAGE PUPILS TO BE THEMSELVES

By actively celebrating difference and diversity, schools can challenge stereotypes and make clear to pupils that it's important that they are able to be themselves.

5 LEAD FROM THE TOP

This work doesn't succeed if it's just the responsibility of one individual. Staff doing this work need to know that this is a priority of the school leadership. School leaders should also make sure their staff have the training and support they need to feel confident doing this work

6 SUPPORT TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Primary schools can prepare pupils for entering secondary school by making clear that they do not have to put up with homophobic bullying. By engaging with their feeder secondary schools, they can also ensure their policies protect difference and diversity too.

7 INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

Schools should seek young people's involvement in work around homophobic bullying and celebrating difference; this allows schools to get their pupils' input and buy-in for the work.

8 ENGAGE PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers should be kept involved about this work and encouraged to get involved. Being open about efforts to celebrate difference and diversity means it's much less likely a school will experience resistance from parents.

9 USE THE LAW

Schools should remember that it's their responsibility to make sure that pupils from all backgrounds feel included in their learning. Ofsted in particular now expects to see evidence of schools tackling homophobic bullying as part of its inspections which provides schools with strong justification for doing this work.

10 LEARN FROM OTHERS

This guide highlights the excellent work that many schools are already doing in this area. Schools at the beginning of their journey don't need to reinvent the wheel, but instead can learn from the best practice of others. Stonewall's school champions programme is designed to help schools do just that, creating a network of schools to share best practice with one another.

10 Resources



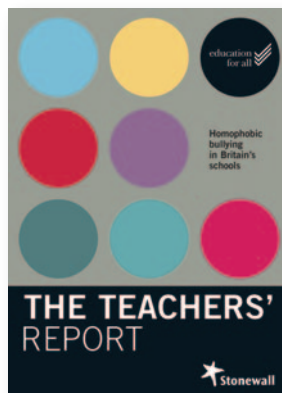
Different Families: the experiences of children with gay parents (2010)



Celebrating difference: Challenging homophobia in primary schools (2011)
28 minute primary school staff training DVD



Different Families posters help schools to celebrate difference

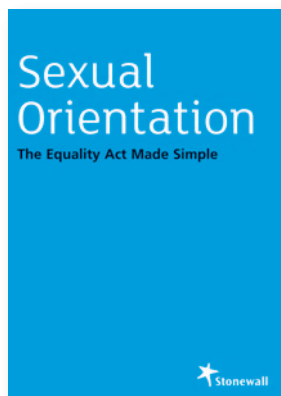


The Teachers' Report (2009): YouGov polling of over 2,000 primary and secondary school staff about homophobic bullying



The School Report: The experiences of gay young people in Britain's schools in 2012

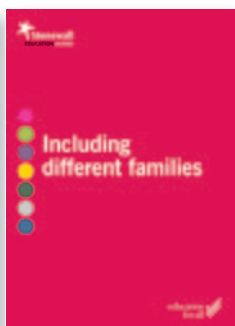
Visit <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/primaryschoolbooks> to find our Primary School Book List: A comprehensive list of books dealing with same-sex relationships and different families each with a brief plot summary and Stonewall recommendations.



*Sexual Orientation
The Equality Act Made
Simple*



Some People Are Gay. Get Over It! posters, postcards and stickers. Posters are also available in a range of different languages.



Education Guides – including Challenging homophobic language; Including different families; Working with faith communities and Effective school leadership



The schools

The best practice examples in this guide are taken from the work of eight primary schools from across the country who have been leading on this work. Without the contributions from these schools and the excellent work that they have been doing, this guide would not have been possible. We'd like to thank them. These schools are:

Holbrook Primary School, Wiltshire Holbrook is a school of 240 pupils in Wiltshire's county town of Trowbridge. The school intake is largely white British. The school has a higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

The Jenny Hammond Primary School, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Jenny Hammond is a one-form entry primary school in the south of Waltham Forest. The school community comprises higher than average numbers of children eligible for free school meals, children from minority ethnic groups and pupils who have English as an additional language.

Ladycross Infant School, Derbyshire Ladycross is an average sized urban school between Derby and Nottingham. There are 250 children on roll, of which most are of white ethnic origin.

Martins Wood Primary School, Stevenage Martins Wood is a large primary school of almost 500 pupils. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds, although around a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Cunningham Hill Junior School, St Albans Cunningham Hill has 240 pupils, almost a third of whom are from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of young people on free school meals has been increasing year on year.

St. Luke's Primary School, Brighton St Luke's is a very large community school with 628 pupils. The school was judged Outstanding by Ofsted. Sixteen per cent of the school population are on free school meals and 28 per cent are on the special

educational needs register. Almost a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

St Matthew's Primary School, Cambridgeshire St Matthew's is a large city primary school in Cambridge, which currently has approximately 460 pupils. It has a diverse intake, socially, culturally and ethnically.

Malmesbury Park Primary School, Bournemouth Malmesbury Park is a very large primary school in Bournemouth with approximately seven hundred pupils. The school prides itself on having a rich tapestry of culture, religion, colour and faith. The school has over 29 different home languages.

Get in touch with Stonewall

Everything we do is based on meeting the needs of schools, teachers and young people. Please do get in touch with us to share your experiences and tell us what you think about our materials.

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Stonewall School CHAMPIONS

Join the nationwide movement to celebrate difference and challenge homophobic bullying in Britain's schools! Stonewall wants to work with your school to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for all children and young people. You can empower your students and staff alike by becoming a **School Champion**, joining the 10,000 primary and secondary schools already involved in Stonewall's education programmes.



The School Champions programme confers an extensive package of tailored support and exclusive benefits on primary schools for the subsidised £100 membership fee, including:

- **benchmarking your school's current policies and practices** against the new Ofsted September 2012 framework, legal requirements and national best practice;
- **Stonewall's acclaimed set of age appropriate primary school resources** for teachers and pupils;
- **a dedicated point of contact on Stonewall's specialist education team**, who will provide on-going support and guidance for your school;
- **networking opportunities at free training seminars** held exclusively for our **School Champions** members;
- **heavily discounted access** to continuing professional development training for teachers, and Stonewall's **Education for All Conference**; and
- **joint branding including exclusive use of the Stonewall School Champions logo** for internal and external communications.

Join now at www.stonewall.org.uk/schoolchampions or email schoolchampions@stonewall.org.uk for more information

Primary best practice guide

How primary schools
are celebrating difference
and tackling homophobia

